



# INVOLVING CUSTOMERS IN SHAPING OUR FUTURE

## Feedback on Survey Findings

Hunter Water is currently considering possible investments in water, wastewater, stormwater, urban amenity and other services for the period between 2020 and 2025. In mid-2018 we asked our customers to give us a clearer idea of the investment choices that they think we should make.

Some investments are needed in order to comply with regulations and standards set by government. **Our survey focussed on investments that we think our customers may like us to make to help create the region our communities desire.**

All of the potential investments described in our survey increase our costs, so we would need to increase customer bills starting from 2020. We realise our customers have budget constraints so we asked you for feedback to help us balance service provision with bill increases.

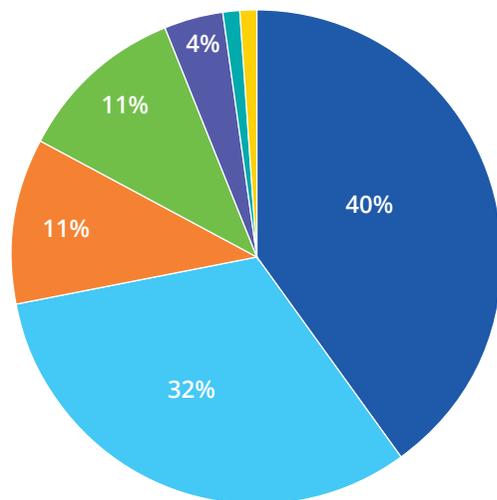
For each type of investment, customers were presented with a range of service levels and the corresponding increase in their Hunter Water bill. Customers were asked to indicate which options were acceptable. At the end, customers were shown the overall impact of their choices on their bill and were provided the option to revise their preferences until they were comfortable.

## Who we spoke to

Invitations to complete the online survey were sent to a randomly-selected sample of customers that have provided us with an email address and told us we could use it to help plan our services and activities.

Almost 700 residential customers helped us understand the services they want us to provide in the future.

That sounds like a small proportion of the half a million people we serve but statisticians tells us there are enough responses to be confident that the results are representative.



- Newcastle
- Lake Macquarie
- Maitland
- Port Stephens
- Cessnock
- Singleton
- Dungog



**Females 51%**



**Males 49%**



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## What you told us

The survey results show that most residential customers are willing to pay for Hunter Water to provide some higher liveability and environmental service standards between 2020 and 2025.

As we expected, the some types of households are willing (and able) to spend more on these types of services than others.



### Stormwater amenity

### Carbon footprint

### Stormwater harvesting

### Recycled water for public parks

### Recycled water for business

### Water efficiency

Approximately 74% were willing to pay more so that we can invest in bank work and landscaping of open stormwater channels by doing things like replacing concrete walls with natural materials and plants. People's preferences for the length of channel that we improve was evenly split across all options provided in the survey.

Providing water and wastewater services requires large amounts of energy. Hunter Water produces carbon emissions that contribute to climate change. Around 75% of respondents were willing to pay \$1 or more towards reducing our carbon emissions. Around half said they were willing to pay an extra \$6 on Hunter Water bills each year.

Around 80% were willing to pay \$2 or more towards increasing stormwater harvesting. Currently there are only a few small stormwater harvesting schemes in the Hunter. Stormwater harvesting for irrigation of parks and sporting grounds can help save drinking water.

Approximately 77% of customers were willing to pay more (\$1.00 to \$2.50 per year) for Hunter Water to increase the amount of wastewater turned into recycled water for irrigation of parks and sporting grounds. This would save drinking water supplies while reducing the amount of treated wastewater discharged to waterways.

Customers surveyed have mixed views about Hunter Water investing in increasing wastewater recycling to business and industry during 2020-25 if it costs more than providing them with drinking water or is not the best way to meet environmental standards. About half of our customers support investing and half do not.

Customers support investing in water conservation programs targeted at households having difficulty paying their water bills and those with high water use. Around 70% said they were willing to pay at least \$1 to increase the number of households assisted.

## What happens now

Hunter Water will use the results of the survey to help plan our activities and to help set prices. We are still working through the details.

We will explain how we have used your feedback in our submission of proposed prices to the independent regulator - the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). IPART will then scrutinise our proposal and directly invite views from customers and stakeholder before setting prices.

New prices will probably be set for 4 or 5 years starting on 1 July 2020.

**To provide feedback or for further information: Visit <https://yourvoice.hunterwater.com.au/>**

Hunter Water has a dedicated online area called "Price Review 2019" that we use to outline other engagement opportunities. It also provides a way for you to provide us with feedback or ask a question at any time.